

*National Transportation Act, 1986*

House will recall that the Conservative Government was elected on a platform of jobs, jobs, jobs. Before the last election, the Conservatives were saying: Vote for us and we shall create jobs. Yet, the Bill does the exact opposite of what this electoral promise implied because, if we look at what happened in the United States when the American authorities deregulated the industry, we find that there was a series of layoffs and a major displacement in the air industry. Between 1978 and 1985, some 40,000 workers in the air industry lost their jobs in the United States. This Bill, however thick it may be, contains nothing to protect jobs in the air industry. It contains nothing to force the air carriers to compensate workers who have to move to keep their jobs or to give adequate notice to employees being laid off.

We feel that Bill C-18 will lead to major disruption of the air transportation industry, the trucking sector, and our two railway companies in this country. All intervenors who testified before the Standing Committee of the House of Commons on Transport which examined the Government's paper, *Freedom to Move*, and I say all intervenors, made it clear to the Conservative Government that this Bill would have serious repercussions on employment levels in the transportation industry in Canada. Mr. Speaker, traditionally, Canada's transportation sector has been among the most fertile and most stable sources of employment in the history of this country. Our country was developed thanks to our ability to improve our transportation modes, including the railways, highways and our aviation industry with its many airports across this country. I think we can say that in the past, thousands of Canadians have earned an honest living, made good wages and enjoyed job security in the transportation sector in Canada. I therefore have no hesitation in saying that the Government's hasty decision to proceed with total deregulation may severely affect the number of jobs available and the job security of those who traditionally earn a living by working for one of our Canadian transport companies.

I find that unacceptable. And that is why I support a suggestion submitted by one of our colleagues who presented an amendment that would send this Bill back to the Standing Committee on Transport with the request that it reassess the entire question, and add firmer guarantees for employment security to the Bill, as of now, if possible.

I know this Bill contains many other deficiencies. Unfortunately, our Standing Orders do not give me more than 10 minutes at this stage. When I next pursue the matter, I will point out all the loopholes and reasons for concern this Bill contains, not only for workers in the transportation industry but for those who enjoy the benefits of our very efficient transport infrastructure here in Canada.

● (1200)

[English]

**Mr. Cyril Keeper (Winnipeg North Centre):** Mr. Speaker, I must say that I am a bit disappointed that I did not hear a few more of my colleagues from the government side taking an

opportunity to participate in this debate. I extend an invitation to them to enter this debate following my remarks which are limited to 10 minutes. If government Members rise, they may contribute to the public discussion on this very crucial matter. This is an essentially important piece of legislation. I would like to hear the Conservative response to my understanding of the implications of this legislation, and that of my colleagues who have spoken on it. I invite Conservative Members to speak rather than to remain silent, waiting for the negative impacts of this legislation on Canadians.

This legislation is gambling with Canadian interests. It is playing Russian roulette with our economic and transportation needs. The Government is gambling that its approach to transportation will work.

**Mr. Blenkarn:** Right.

**Mr. Keeper:** The Hon. Member over there has said that this is right and I hope he rises after I have finished to elaborate. Canadians do not want to gamble with essential services—

**Mr. Blenkarn:** It was studied by the committee.

**Mr. Keeper:** It is interesting that the Hon. Member can heckle. I appreciate his capacities in that regard—

**Mr. Gauthier:** He's got good lungs and that's all he's got.

**Mr. Keeper:** He has good lungs and I would hope that he would take the opportunity to make a speech and make good use of those lungs so that we may hear his position on the gamble the Government is taking with our need for transportation services and for safety in transportation.

I would like to elaborate a bit on the substance of this issue. It is my understanding that the carrot the Government is holding out to the Canadian public is lower transportation fares; that if the Government moves out of the area of transportation and is no longer a watchdog, we can expect to have lower transportation fares. In fact, by holding out this carrot, the Government has even captivated those who do analyses for the Consumers' Association of Canada, or at least it has up until now.

I heard recently that a representative of the Consumers' Association of Canada has said that while the association agrees with deregulation in principle, if it will mean less competition and only two major carriers in Canada—and it seems to be moving in that direction—then the association has doubts. It has said that if the interests of Canadian consumers will be hurt, it will have to re-evaluate its position on this legislation.

We should remind ourselves that we have already begun to move in the direction of deregulation. When the Liberal Government was in office, it commenced that process, a number of years ago. I think it is worth while to remind Canadians that, while Liberal Members in Opposition may be taking strong stands with regard to deregulation, they started the ball rolling. They started the snowball rolling down the